

K-12 Advisory Committee Proposal for the Steering Committee

INTRODUCTION

In May 1993, House Bill 1209 made a landmark commitment to education and high achievement standards that has changed and improved our schools dramatically: All children **can** learn. It's now 2006, and our world economy is even more globally competitive: All children **must** learn.

Since implementation in 1993, the number of students meeting or exceeding our academic standards has doubled. Four times as many students are tackling the challenge of Advanced Placement courses and our scores on college entrance tests, such as the SAT and ACT, are some of the highest in the nation. Success stories can be found even in schools where historically the odds have been stacked against student success.

K-12 educators have accomplished these outstanding academic gains by focusing teaching on our standards, aligning limited resources to those standards, and working both harder and smarter. They have done so in spite of funding that has not kept pace with increasing student needs.

Now, we must once again double, and, due to the achievement gap, in some groups more than double, student achievement at a highly accelerated pace. To accomplish this goal we must increase funding. Washington must make evidence-based investments in our K-12 system with meaningful accountability for results. For this reason, **Washington is at a learning and school finance crossroad.**

The K-12 Advisory Committee has used our ten years of experience with education reform and the research of our consultants to propose the following recommendations:

1. Redefine the constitutional definition of "Basic Education" to be based on the four student learning goals in HB 1209 and five measurable system goals adopted by the K-12 Advisory Committee and reaffirm that the state is responsible for funding this definition of basic education.
2. Reengineer and personalize our schools based on research driven and evidence-based investments tied to accountability for the use of the new resources. This involves a significant change to school funding and includes fixing major problems in the current funding system.
3. Restructure our system of educator development and compensation to attract, prepare, retool and retain world-class, culturally-competent and

- diverse teachers and education leaders. Provide compensation adequate to attract and retain highly competent people, and use the new compensation as part of an incentive system to enhance the quality of instruction in Washington.
4. **Realign curriculum and instructional supports to grade-level expectations and rigorous graduation requirements** so that we can be more intentional in our instruction and meet the ambitious goals we are setting.

These recommendations should be viewed as a package. They will require significant financial and staff investments to produce needed learning gains for our students. Therefore, we recommend a carefully planned 6-8 year phase-in with full impact in a decade. As of the July Steering Committee meeting, our prioritization is not yet complete.

To accomplish our goals, funding and accountability must be linked. Current elements of our accountability system include transparent data regarding school and student achievement on the WASL, drop-out and graduation rates, school improvement assistance and federal sanctions to eliminate the achievement gap.

An improved accountability program must include more support and incentives for student and school success. Existing school improvement programs must be strengthened based on results. Schools in need of improvement will need to follow specific requirements, and their flexibility should increase as performance improves.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our goals are based on a set of guiding principles that are included in Appendix A.

K-12 ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Recommendation #1: Redefine the constitutional definition of “Basic Education” to be based on the four student learning goals in HB 1209 and five measurable system goals adopted by the K-12 Advisory Committee and reaffirm that the state is responsible for funding this definition of basic education.

Washington’s constitution requires the state to fund its definition of “basic education.” With the passage of HB 1209 in 1993 we changed the definition of what we expect our children to know and be able to do. It is time to bring that definition and funding into alignment. Consequently, we reaffirm the four student learning goals and propose five measurable system goals as a redefinition of basic education. We would require the state to provide funding adequate to provide all children the opportunity to meet these goals.

Student Learning Goals

1. Read with comprehension, write with skill, and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings;
2. Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history; geography; arts; and health and fitness;
3. Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate experience and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and
4. Understand the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

System Goals

1. All students will enter kindergarten with the interpersonal, language, early literacy, and thinking skills needed to succeed.
2. All students will transition from third grade proficient in reading and mathematics and with demonstrated ability to function successfully as responsible participants in their learning.
3. All students will transition from eighth grade with proficiency in core academic subjects, demonstrated citizenship skills, and an initial plan for high school and beyond.
4. All students will graduate with both the multicultural and international perspectives and skills needed to live, learn, and work in a global society.
5. All students will complete a rigorous high school course of study with proficiencies in core academic skills needed to successfully enter a post-high

school education program or their choice of a career pathway for the 21st century.

The commitment to a new definition of basic education is significant – it requires the state, not local voters, to provide an ample and reliable stream of funds to meet these needs.

Recommendation #2: Reengineer and personalize our schools based on research-driven and evidence based investments.

Provide students and schools with the resources they need to succeed. Key elements include:

- **Implement an early learner staffing and support system** that provides the time and early interventions to help all students pre-k to third grade achieve high levels of reading and mathematics skills. Full-day kindergarten for all children should be phased in as highly-trained, culturally competent staff, appropriate curriculum options, and space are available to support the new program. The full-day kindergarten transition should be coordinated with **expanded preschool programs** in collaboration with the Department of Early Learning. In conjunction with the phase-in, pilots of seamless ungraded primary programs with more individualized instruction should be supported. Phase-in a reduction of class size to one teacher to 15 K-3 students.
- **Support struggling students and students who want to soar ahead.** Provide additional enrichment opportunities and learning interventions through tutoring and targeted instruction during and after the school day and school year (summer school, intersessions, extended day, Saturday programs, etc.). No child who is behind our baseline expectations should be denied additional resources necessary to catch up.
- **Support the language proficiency and academic success of English Language Learners (ELL)** through the design and implementation of an evidence-based, unified state English Language Development curriculum menu, and targeted statewide professional development for teachers who serve ELL students in the classroom. Reinstate the preschool ELL program allocation that was eliminated in 1997.
- **Improve funding for special education**, phased-in with the first wave of funding enhancements. The Advisory Committee assumes that special education will be funded as a derivative of an improved general education funding base with recognition of students and districts with differing and more intensive needs. The funding formula for special education is thus dependent on concluding discussions of general education formulas.

- **Personalize education for students and their families.** Provide K-12 students and their families planning and mentoring through programs such as Navigation 101 or Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). Develop a more culturally-sensitive integrated system of family and community outreach to support all students and keep them academically engaged.
- **Aggressively pursue drop-out intervention, prevention, and retrieval strategies** with community partnerships.
- **Phase in targeted class size reductions** for students in grades four through twelve to a ratio of one teacher to 25 students.
- **Fix problems in our current funding system.**
 - Eliminate salary and levy grandfathering.
 - Improve transparency of school funding so that parents and voters can see how resources are allocated.
- **Improve accountability for effective use of new resources:**
 - Implement building-based bonuses for staff and management for meeting individual school's student learning goals.
 - Require persistently failing districts and schools to adhere to the evidence-based model in persistently failing districts and schools.
 - Districts shall intervene in persistently failing schools and the state shall intervene in persistently failing districts.
 - Eligibility for new money shall be contingent on a district's shift to evidence-based practices.

Recommendation #3: Restructure our system of educator development and compensation to attract, prepare, retool and retain world-class, culturally-competent and diverse teachers and education leaders.

Educator Development

- **Create a new Washington Teaching, Learning, and Leadership Institute.** This institute will use state, national and international education experts to design and implement a master plan for world class professional development, certification, and instructional practices targeted to the needs of Washington students. The Institute will combine face-to-face and virtual interactive learning opportunities for teachers, teacher leaders, school and district leaders, college of education faculty, and paraeducators. Topics will include such issues as: cultural and gender influences on learning styles and family involvement, cultural competence of staff and excellence in literacy, mathematics and science instruction. Successful practices will be implemented through a regional delivery system and transferred into teacher preparation

- programs. A public/private partnership will be formed to help support the institute's work.
- **Expand novice teacher induction** to include two years of mentoring support.
 - **Provide Mentors/Coaches to help** immediately link teacher learning with classroom practices, without taking the teacher from the classroom. We recommend phasing-in this initiative starting with mathematics content and ELL instructional coaches.
 - **Improve quality control of teacher licensure** through a standards-based evaluation of the Professional Certificate at the state level using a process similar to that of the National Board Certification.
 - **Ensure excellent school and district leadership** through an evidence-based system of principal and district leader internship, induction, and coaching that guarantees a high quality practicum experience in pre-service, robust support in the early years, and ongoing coaching. With the added funding, examine and refine the selection process for these critical leadership roles.

Educator Compensation

- **Increase teacher base salary** to become competitive and maintain purchasing power. Design a strategy to eliminate historical salary inequities (salary grandfathering) over the next several years.
- **Compensate performance, knowledge and skills** at three levels: 1) professional certification, 2) mentor/coach certification, and 3) National Board Certification. Pilot a system, designed in collaboration with key stakeholders, to add further compensation linked to indicators that impact student achievement, such as a multi-tiered licensure system and school based performance pay.
 - **Use conditional loan scholarships** and increased access to alternative routes to certification to recruit and retain high quality and culturally diverse teachers in hard to staff schools and in high demand subjects such as mathematics, science, special education and English language learner programs. Add **wage premiums** as a further incentive in hard to staff schools.
 - **Recognize prior related experience** of educational staff associates (e.g. nurses, psychologists, counselors) and **career and technical educators** on the salary schedule. Open alternative routes to certification for these fields.
 - **Allocate compensation** for administrators, principals, and classified staff at updated and competitive rates.
 - **Explore** a model that would apply a **fair regional adjustment factor** to salaries.

Recommendation #4: Realign curriculum and instructional supports to grade level expectations and rigorous graduation requirements.

- Implement aligned curriculum with state and regional expert assistance.
- Increase rigor and relevance in the eleventh and twelfth grades so that our students are prepared for college or a career path that leads to a living wage. Strengthen opportunities for: Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate; dual credit programs such as Tech Prep; college in the high school; rigorous career and technical education, especially in high demand fields; apprenticeship; and academic and trades Running Start programs. Explore participation in national programs setting higher standards such as the American Diploma Project or the "High Schools that Work" program from the Southern Regional Education Board.
- Explore programs to increase student access to World Languages and Native American languages beginning in the early grades as well as creative approaches to building international perspectives into existing curriculum and student projects.
- Reinvent mathematics and science education by developing engaging instructional materials, preparing educators to use high impact strategies, providing grants for an intensive school-based mathematics and science improvement program in our neediest schools, and engaging students, their parents, and the community using a pro-mathematics and science media campaign.
- Assure that rigorous on-line courses and research-based intervention programs are available in all school districts. This is one avenue to assist students in their individualized educational needs. Students can complete credit recovery courses, take courses not usually available in their district, take courses at times more convenient to their schedule, and/or complete the requirements for graduation earlier.

KEEPING IT ALIVE

We must consistently review our progress and the effectiveness of our improvement strategies. In particular, the new finance system should be reviewed and revised as needed every six years to ensure that Washington State is meeting its commitment to fund basic education.

NEXT STEPS AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES

Several components of the funding and policy study remain incomplete as of June 28, 2006. In the next 30 days, prior to final recommendations from the Advisory to the Steering Committee, the following components will be addressed:

Special Education

Recommendations on this element of a school program, and the funding formula, are currently incomplete. The current special education funding formula and the formula recommend by consultants Picus and Odden are a derivative of the funding level for general education. The committee intends to discuss a draft formula at the July meeting, hold public comment, and finalize the formula in August. The August recommendation will address the appropriate derivative for a special education funding formula, an index limit on the number of funded students in special education and the safety net policy.

Funding

Based on the new definition of Basic Education the K-12 Advisory Committee will propose an implementation plan to phase in the elements of its recommended model and the funding and accountability system to support it.

APPENDIX A

Guiding Principles

In developing our recommendations over the past year, we weighed many different options for effecting wholesale improvement in Washington's K-12 educational system. As we sorted through various trade-offs, a set of principles emerged from the process that informed our decisions and led, ultimately, to the recommendations contained in this report. These principles comprise a statement of beliefs, a foundation for our recommendations, and guidelines for prioritizing specific recommendations.

- 1) We, as a society, are responsible for helping all of our children become fulfilled, productive citizens. Quality education is critical to achieving this goal. Our highest societal and educational purpose is to create happy, engaged citizens - not just workers. As citizens of Washington State working through our elected government, we owe all of our children, especially those whose parents are least able to provide for them, a good education relevant to their cultural context within our society.
- 2) The student-teacher bond is the most important element of classroom learning. This bond is fundamentally strengthened by strong parent and community engagement, both within and beyond the classroom. Students learn best when they are motivated by inspiring, competent, caring teachers. Teachers teach best when they have the full support and involvement of caring parents and communities.
- 3) We must provide great teachers for all of our students, from pre-school through high school and beyond. This means hiring the best people, growing them professionally and motivating them to keep teaching within Washington State across an entire career.

4) Great teachers are supported by great teams: principals, fellow teachers, teaching mentors, administrators, para-educators, parents, community leaders, and the people who maintain and operate our schools. Great administrators, especially school principals, are crucial to creating the leadership environment in which teachers can succeed. Instructional excellence is the core of great teaching, and broad use of instructional best practices comes from an effective educational system. Great teachers can't do it alone.

5) Great teachers deserve great compensation and great support. First and foremost, this means pay, benefits and societal respect commensurate with a valued professional career.

6) Teachers are accountable for providing every student the genuine opportunity for success. Just as success deserves reward, it demands accountability.